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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER MYCHAJLIW PROVIDES RELIEF FOR THOSE FACING COVID RELATED FINES

Office of Erie County Comptroller changes accounting policies to strip Erie County Health Department from collecting, cashing and depositing fines for COVID violations

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr. announced his office has changed accounting policies and procedures that strip the Erie County Health Department’s collecting, cashing and depositing of all COVID related fines. Effective immediately, the policy change orders all COVID related fines be directly sent to and administered by the Office of Erie County Comptroller, and no longer the Erie County Department of Health.

This policy, effective immediately as of December 3rd, 2020, prevents the Department of Health from collecting COVID related fines and cashing or depositing the revenue on their own. All future collection of checks, fines or deposits must be administered by Comptroller’s Office.

“I am exerting the accounting authority given to my Office by the Erie County Charter. Changing accounting policies fall under my authority as Erie County Comptroller. This change in policy does not require approval by the County Executive or Legislature. It is granted to the Office of Erie County Comptroller regardless of who is elected to the position. I am Erie County’s Chief Fiscal and Accounting Officer, not the Health Department.”

“Dr. Gale Burstein, under my authority under the Erie County Charter, is ordered to have all entities facing COVID related fines to have those financial penalties sent directly to the Office of Erie County Comptroller. The Health Department is no longer allowed to collect, cash or deposit COVID related fines. If she does not comply, I will freeze and close the Health Department’s banking accounts immediately,” said Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw Jr.

Revising accounting policies falls directly under the jurisdiction of the Erie County Comptroller, as it was the case when Comptroller Mychajliw implemented the policy of waiving all penalties for late Hotel Occupancy Tax payments. This was done to provide financial relief to struggling hotels decimated by government forcing the shut down of the economy.

“I changed policies to help businesses crippled by the closure of the economy. I am happy to help again. We must do everything we can to save businesses,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

Comptroller Mychajliw also changed accounting policies in the Office of Erie County Comptroller to establish a staggered payment plan for struggling businesses that may not be able to afford punitive or excessive COVID related fines at one time.

- \$1,000 or less: 20-year payment plan
- \$1,001 to \$5,000: 30-year payment plan
- \$5,001 to \$10,000: 40-year payment plan
- \$10,001 to \$15,000: 50-year payment plan
- \$15,001 and above: 100-year payment plan

“Erie County government is punitively punishing businesses and families due to inconsistent COVID related fines. The golf course where Mark Poloncarz played with his friends without a mask did not face fines. The County Executive and his friends were photographed mask-less, with alcohol and communal food in front of them. Big box stores and supermarkets can have thousands of people shop there. It is mom and pop, small businesses that are being ruined by Erie County government.”

“I am putting my foot down. Enough. Time to fight for and stand up for families and small businesses. Families are being destroyed by a so-called COVID cure that is worse than the disease itself. Businesses and community groups facing those COVID related fines now have relief with a payment plan. As the Taxpayer’s Watchdog I will never back down in the fight against big government punitively punishing small businesses,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.

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